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**Northampton
Health Department**

For Immediate Release - April 13, 2021

**Northampton and Amherst Health Departments
Pause Use of
Janssen Johnson & Johnson Vaccine**

NORTHAMPTON - Today, the Northampton Health Department vaccine program, which includes the Amherst site at the Bangs Community Center, will follow the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) recommendations to pause the use of the Janssen Johnson and Johnson COVID19 vaccine in light of the recent news about the Janssen Johnson & Johnson (J&J) Vaccine. Appointments scheduled for J&J vaccine this week will be postponed until further notice. The pause in the administration of this vaccine comes as an abundance of caution on all levels.

What we know so far: According to the CDC and FDA, a rare blood clot diagnosis occurred in six people who had recently also received the Janssen Johnson and Johnson COVID19 injection. At this time it is not yet known whether this rare diagnosis was directly related to the vaccine or whether these individuals already had some other risk factors or causes. Researchers will look into each case as well as the “baseline” rate of the particular diagnosis. The baseline rate means how often something typically happens in people in the regular population. The FDA and CDC will also educate the healthcare provider community about the treatment of this very unusual diagnosis. Millions of people have received this vaccine and there is the possibility these blood clots were not related to the vaccine. However, for now, the FDA and CDC are recommending that the vaccine be paused until we have more information. Also they state, “People who have received the J&J vaccine who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider.”

Background:

- The FDA has reported that as of 4/12, 6.8m+ doses of the J&J vaccine have been administered in the U.S. CDC & FDA are reviewing data involving 6 reported U.S. cases of

a rare and severe type of blood clot in individuals after receiving the vaccine. Right now, these conditions appear to be extremely rare.

- As of April 12th, 181,034 doses of J&J have been administered in Massachusetts.
- CDC will convene a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) on Wednesday to further review these cases and assess their potential significance. FDA will review that analysis as it also investigates these
- Individuals that have appointments scheduled for a J&J vaccine that have questions about their upcoming appointment should contact the provider they booked with directly.
- Individuals are encouraged to contact their physician if they have received the J&J vaccine and have concerns.

Since the first doses in January, the Northampton Health Department has been encouraging all who come in for vaccines to sign up for the V-Safe app which monitors for typical and atypical side effects in the weeks after the vaccination. Also, the Health Department Clinic's lead public health has been reporting even minor side effects of any of the three COVID-19 vaccines we have administered, Moderna, Pfizer, and Janssen Johnson and Johnson, directly to the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) at the CDC. Individuals and their healthcare providers are advised to do so as well.

The Janssen Johnson and Johnson vaccine has been found to prevent severe COVID-19. It has been very popular due to its one-dose schedule. If it becomes clear that the vaccine is safe to resume, the Northampton Health Department will follow Massachusetts DPH, CDC, and FDA guidance.

Since January 11, 2021, the Northampton Health Department Clinic has administered 1301 doses of Janssen Johnson & Johnson vaccine, 1905 doses of Moderna vaccine, and 17,215 doses of Pfizer vaccine.

Our sympathy goes out to the individuals who have developed this rare condition and their families. Our continued efforts also go to the individuals and families suffering with COVID. At this time we don't know and will continue to follow guidance from the CDC, FDA and Massachusetts DPH. If a person experiences any symptom they suspect is a side effect of any vaccine, they should report it to their healthcare provider and visit the VAERS website.

<https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>

For more information, please contact the Northampton Health Department at healthdept@northamptonma.gov or at (413) 587-1219.